



# Sermon Discussion Guide

modernfamily  
the Gospel of the Church


## “Living in the Hard”

Ephesians 3:1-13

Rev. Ray Cortese, October 4 & 5, 2014

### Step 1: Reflect on the Text

Why do we do this first? We always want to start with the Bible. The goal is to meditate on the Word and read it with an ear sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s promptings. Look for words or phrases that stand out through logic, repetition, layout, etc.

-  Read Ephesians 3:1-13. What stood out to you? What did you find interesting and/or important? What was challenging or caused you to have questions?

### Step 2: Reflect on the Sermon

#### INTRODUCTION

- 1 What comes immediately to mind when you hear the phrase, “Life is hard”? What is the “hard” that you are living in right now?
- 2 Summarize the *Big Idea* of the sermon in *one phrase or sentence* (Note: this is not the same as listing the main points). In other words, if someone woke you up at 3am on Monday morning and asked, “What was the sermon about on Sunday?” what would you say in the midst of your sleepy haze?

#### HARD LIVING: EMBRACE YOUR IDENTITY

- 3 What does it mean to be a “prisoner of Christ”? In what area(s) do you need to surrender your autonomy to Jesus? In what ways do you need to let God write your story?
- 4 How does dying to yourself and living for others help see you through the hard? How might God be calling you to give up your life for the sake of someone else?

## HARD LIVING: STEWARD THE GOSPEL

- 5 In your own words, what is a steward?
- 6 When was the last time you were stunned by the grace of God toward you? Can you name some reasons why you *don't* deserve the love of God?
- 7 What are some ways that you have been called to give away the grace of God that you have received freely? Ray said, "God might allow you to live in a hard place in order to bless others." Can you give an example?

## HARD LIVING: EMBODY THE MYSTERY

- 8 In your own words, what is the "mystery of the gospel"? What evidence of the mystery does Paul reference? What is the role of the church in the mystery? What keeps people from believing in the centrality of the church?
- 9 Ray said, "Broken hearts and bodies get healed physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally." How have you seen this happen in your life or someone else's life?
- 10 How does knowing that your suffering is purposeful sustain you?

## Step 3: Final Reflections

- † How has your understanding, appreciation, and love for Jesus and the gospel grown as a result of this study?
- ♥ In what areas of faith and practice are you feeling convicted by the Holy Spirit to act as a result of this study?